AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1.   (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a detecting unit that detects all pieces of additional information that are embedded in image data;

a storage unit that stores the detected pieces of additional information in association with location information thereof;

an analyzing unit that analyzes the detected pieces of additional information and judges whether any of the detected pieces of additional information includes predetermined information that is updateable; and

an embedding unit that

(1) updates, when a judgment result of the analyzing unit is affirmative, the predetermined information included in the piece of additional information, and embeds the piece of additional information including the updated predetermined information into the image data at a location where the piece of additional predetermined information is originally embedded, by referring to the stored location information, and

(2) embeds, when the judgment result of the analyzing unit is negative, a new piece of additional information including updated information into the image data at a location that does not overlap locations where the detected pieces of

additional information are embedded, by referring to the stored location information, the updated information being equivalent to the predetermined information.

2.   (Canceled)

3.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein when the analyzing unit analyzes the detected pieces of additional information, the analyzing unit employs a predetermined embedding format used by the embedding unit.

4.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising,

a warning unit that issues, when the analyzing unit finds that any of the detected pieces of additional information is unanalyzable, a warning to the effect that the piece of additional information is unanalyzable.

5.   (Original) The image processing unit according to Claim 1, wherein when the analyzing unit finds that any of the detected pieces of additional information is unanalyzable, the analyzing unit judges that the piece of additional information does not include the predetermined information.

6.   (Original) The image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the predetermined information includes information about a date when the image data is processed.

7.   (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus equipped with an

image processing apparatus that processes inputted first image data so as to output

second image data, the image forming apparatus forming an image according to the

second image data,

the image processing apparatus comprising:

a detecting unit that detects all pieces of additional information that are

embedded in the first image data;

a storage unit that stores the detected pieces of additional information

in association with location information thereof;

an analyzing unit that analyzes the detected pieces of additional

information and judges whether any of the detected pieces of additional information

includes predetermined information that is updateable; and

an embedding unit that

(1) updates, when a judgment result of the analyzing unit is affirmative,

the predetermined information included in the piece of additional information, and

embeds the piece of additional information including the updated predetermined

information into the first image data at a location where the piece of additional

predetermined information is originally embedded, by referring to the stored location

information, and

(2) embeds, when the judgment result of the analyzing unit is negative,

a new piece of additional information including updated information into the first

image data at a location that does not overlap locations where the detected pieces of

additional information are embedded, by referring to the stored location information, the updated information being equivalent to the predetermined information,

wherein the first image data embedded with the updated predetermined information and/or the new piece of additional information is outputted as the second image data.

8.   (Canceled)

9.   (Original) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein when the analyzing unit analyzes the detected pieces of additional information, the analyzing unit employs a predetermined embedding format used by the embedding unit.

10.   (Original) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein the image processing apparatus further comprises,

a warning unit that issues, when the analyzing unit finds that any of the detected pieces of additional information is unanalyzable, a warning to the effect that the piece of additional information is unanalyzable.

11.   (Original) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein when the analyzing unit finds that any of the detected pieces of additional information is unanalyzable, the analyzing unit judges that the piece of additional information does not include the predetermined information.

12.   (Original) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 7,

wherein the predetermined information includes information about a

date when the image data is processed.

13.   (Currently Amended) A method for embedding additional information

in image data comprising:

a first step of detecting all pieces of additional information that are

embedded in the image data;

a second step of storing the detected pieces of additional information in

association with location information thereof;

a third ~~second~~ step of analyzing the detected pieces of additional

information and judging whether any of the detected pieces of additional information

includes predetermined information that is updateable; [[and]]

a fourth ~~third~~ step of updating, when a judgment result in the third

~~second~~ step is affirmative, the predetermined information included in the piece of

additional information, and embedding the piece of additional information including

the updated predetermined information into the image data at a location where the

piece of additional ~~predetermined~~ information is originally embedded, by referring to

the stored location information, and

a fifth ~~fourth~~ step of embedding, when the judgment result in the third

~~second~~ step is negative, a new piece of additional information including updated

information into the image data at a location that does not overlap locations where

the detected pieces of additional information are embedded, by referring to the

<u>stored location information</u>, the updated information being equivalent to the
predetermined information.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) The method for embedding additional
information in image data according to Claim 13,

wherein when the detected pieces of additional information are
analyzed in the <u>third</u> ~~second~~ step, a predetermined embedding format used for
embedding the piece of additional information in the <u>fourth</u> ~~third~~ step and the new
piece of additional information in the <u>fifth</u> ~~fourth~~ step is employed.

16. (Currently Amended) The method for embedding additional
information in image data according to Claim 13, further comprising,

a warning step of issuing, when any of the detected pieces of additional
information is judged to be unanalyzable in the <u>third</u> ~~second~~ step, a warning to the
effect that the piece of additional information is unanalyzable.

17. (Currently Amended) The method for embedding additional
information in image data, according to Claim 13,

wherein when any of the detected pieces of additional information is
judged to be unanalyzable in the <u>third</u> ~~second~~ step, the piece of additional
information is judged not to include the predetermined information.

18.   (Original) The method for embedding additional information in image

data according to Claim 13,

wherein the predetermined information includes information about a

date when the image data is processed.

19.   (Currently Amended) The method for embedding additional

information in image data according to Claim 13, further comprising,

a step of forming an image according to the image data that includes

one of (a) the updated predetermined information embedded in the fourth third step

and (b) the new piece of additional information embedded in the fifth fourth step.

20.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing a

program that is executed by a computer, the program making the computer function

as the following:

a detecting means for detecting all pieces of additional information that

are embedded in image data;

a storing means for storing the detected pieces of additional

information in association with location information thereof;

an analyzing means for analyzing the detected pieces of additional

information and judging whether any of the detected pieces of additional information

includes predetermined information that is updateable; and

an embedding means for

(1) updating, when a judgment result of the analyzing means is

affirmative, the predetermined information included in the piece of additional

information, and embedding <u>the piece of additional information including</u> the updated predetermined information into the image data at a location where the <u>piece of additional</u> ~~predetermined~~ information is originally embedded<u>, by referring to the stored location information</u>, and

(2) embedding, when the judgment result of the analyzing means is negative, a new piece of additional information including updated information into the image data at a location that does not overlap locations where the detected pieces of additional information are embedded<u>, by referring to the stored location information</u>, the updated information being equivalent to the predetermined information.

21.   (Canceled)

22.   (Original) The program according to Claim 20, wherein when the analyzing means analyzes the detected pieces of additional information, the analyzing means employs a predetermined embedding format used by the embedding means.

23.   (Original) The program according to Claim 20, making the computer further function as the following, a warning means for issuing, when the analyzing means finds that any of the detected pieces of additional information is unanalyzable, a warning to the effect that the piece of additional information is unanalyzable.

24.   (Original) The program according to Claim 20,

wherein when the analyzing means finds that any of the detected

pieces of additional information is unanalyzable, the analyzing means judges that the

piece of additional information does not include the predetermined information.

25.   (Original) The program according to Claim 20,

wherein the predetermined information includes information about a

date when the image data is processed.

26.   (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

a detecting unit that detects additional information that is embedded in

image data; [[and]]

a storage unit that stores the detected additional information in

association with location information thereof; and

an embedding unit that embeds new additional information in the

image data at a location that does not overlap a location where the detected

additional information is embedded, by referring to the stored location information.

27.   (Currently Amended) A method for embedding additional information

in image data, comprising:

a first step of detecting additional information that is embedded in

image data; [[and]]

a second step of storing the detected additional information in

association with location information thereof; and

a third ~~second~~ step of embedding new additional information into the image data at a location that does not overlap a location where the detected additional information is embedded, by referring to the stored location information.

28. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium containing a program that is executed by a computer, the program making the computer function as the following:

a detecting means for detecting additional information that is embedded in image data; [[and]]

a storage means for storing the detected additional information in association with location information thereof; and

an embedding means for embedding new additional information into the image data at a location that does not overlap a location where the detected additional information is embedded, by referring to the stored location information.